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OVERSEAS U.S. BASES:

Cold War Relics or Essential to U.S. Strategy?

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**"The United States does not maintain our security
presence as some act of charity."**

President George Bush, in
Singapore January 3, 1992

Then why, Mr President? Does the United States have a calculated scheme for overseas forces? Or is our forward strategy--specifically regarding overseas bases--the product of habit, inertia, precedent, bureaucratic politics, host demands, military excess, convenience, budget, or all of the above?

The late 1940s and early 50s gave roots to current overseas basing arrangements--namely, the Truman Doctrine, formation of NATO, and the Korean War. This forward presence was designed to help contain the Soviet Union where any gain by communism was perceived as a threat to the world balance of power.¹

Today, the U.S. is paring its overseas forces in response to economics and a rapidly changing world. But are the reductions just less of the same containment structure--or based on a new, post-Cold War rationale?

The U.S. has been unclear about the necessity for certain overseas bases--and at times, for overseas installations in general. A few months ago we appeared determined to make a deal with the Philippines for two major facilities (Clark and Subic). Critics charged the U.S. was being held for ransom by a country that no longer cared about or needed our military presence. Then, after Mount Pinatubo erupted, we decided the bases were not vital and began withdrawing. What changed? Our national interests? Alternatives? The threat?

Since World War II, the United States has used forward presence as the centerpiece of our national military strategy.² In the minds of many U.S. military and diplomatic professionals, such a strategy isn't credible without overseas bases. However, a growing segment in the public and Congress contends overseas bases are no longer justified based on economics and the lack of a threat.

I disagree with both trains of thought. In my opinion, there is a continuing, but diminished, role for U.S. bases overseas. However, there is no longer a mandate to have bases in every world region to demonstrate U.S. interests and commitment.

To understand these conclusions, we must first define a structure of U.S. military forces in the post-Cold War environment. Then we can determine the need for forward presence and overseas basing. Next, we must recognize overseas bases for what they are--a form of access with negotiated limitations. (Conversely, we should realize what they aren't--necessary symbols of commitment, prerequisites for forward presence, or indispensable to establish U.S. credibility). And last, we must design a strategy for where and why these installations are needed to support U.S. interests.

The subject of overseas bases easily gets clouded by emotional political, military, economic, and bureaucratic issues. But, as I will show, recent events have redefined frames of reference for the post-Cold War world. The key becomes our willingness to alter our paradigms to deal with a changing world.

Political Debate: The Starting Line

**"Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom
must undergo the fatigue of supporting it."**

Thomas Paine, 1792

Prompted by economic pressures and the demise of the Soviet Union, the U.S. military is undergoing scrutiny as to form and function. Before focusing on the viability of forward presence as a strategy and overseas basing as a means for executing that strategy, we must determine the basis for structuring the U.S. military absent the East-West confrontation.

The most credible force structure arguments generally tend toward one of two main thrusts: capability-based or threat-based.

The Bush Administration and senior U.S. military leadership support the concept of capability-based forces for dealing with abstract threats. They claim a minimum capability is needed to hedge against and react to both known and potential threats. The United States maintains superpower status under this scheme, which also advocates a significant forward presence with overseas basing to achieve these goals. It relies heavily on the existing structure--keeping major overseas installations primarily in Central Europe, Japan, and Korea.³

The capability strategy is a predictable one. It's the *reasonable man* approach: conservative, minimizing risks. It accounts for evolving commitments with an eye towards hedging against giving up too much too quickly.

However, I believe the capability-based approach is mired in Cold War thinking as demonstrated by recent discussions of our forward presence in Europe. In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. European Command cited nationalist tensions and regional instability as the reason for keeping 150,000 U.S. military personnel based in Europe.⁴ Yet, there is no indication of escalating hostilities nor a threat to the collective security of the region. The leap in logic is too great to justify this stand for maintaining a large combat presence in Europe.

Instead, I suggest a different starting point for analyzing the European example. First, the U.S. presence in the region is based on an alliance: NATO. The status quo is an agreed posture. Before we explore regional force structure, the U.S. role must be assessed in terms of national interests and acceptable levels of risk. The assessment should consider:

- do we intend to remain part of NATO?
- if we remain part of NATO, what role do we want?
 - maintain current leadership position?
 - remain a member but not keep the leadership mantle?
 - fashion military participation after the French model?
- how much is our desired role worth to us?
- is there an acceptable, more affordable alternative?
- what is the international impact of a changed U.S. role in NATO?
- can we negotiate a new military presence which parallels a changed U.S. interest?

The answers to these questions determine the ways and means of regional support in pursuit of U.S. interests. A similar discussion should precede the strategy of type and amount of forward

presence needed in every world region.

The Administration might claim to already have asked such questions. Further, it might argue that evolving U.S. presence in Europe by stages is less risky and more palatable--expressing strategy in finite military numbers rather than political declarations which might be misunderstood. Additionally, keeping 150,000 U.S. military personnel in Europe lessens the strain on NATO as a viable organization during a period of international turmoil.

While evolving the U.S. presence in Europe through streamlining the old Cold War structure may have merit, I maintain the harder, inevitable questions are merely delayed (a recognized tactic in a Presidential election year). The longer we postpone addressing the underlying political questions cited above, the more likely superfluous matters get injected into the discussion and the costlier alternatives become. I contend a similar analysis can be done in each region of the world where the U.S. has vital interests.

Representative Les Aspin, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, leads the threat-based advocates. He argues the country will only support a force sized and shaped to cope with things that *actually* threaten Americans. Mr. Aspin sees no reason to station forces overseas without a recognizable threat (Figure 1 summarizes his view point).

CURRENT MILITARY

Attrition
War by proxy
High technology
Forward deployed
Forward based
Host nation support

PROPOSED MILITARY

Decisive attacks on key nodes
Direct involvement
High-medium-low technology mix
Power projection
U.S. based
Self-reliant

Figure 1. Changing U.S. military to threat-based structure⁵

Mr. Aspin's approach, it seems to me, is further off the mark than that of the capability-based force. To base the U.S. military force structure--including overseas bases--solely on identifiable threats is myopic and shows a poor understanding of history and warfare. This belief is reminiscent of Robert McNamara's naive scientific management approach to National Defense in the 1960s:

- define all parameters
- model the problem
- compute finite numerical answers
- set priorities based on marginal analysis of alternatives

The threat-based argument rewrites history to strengthen its thesis. The Cold War never looked so structured until after the fact. Debates were heated and many during the last five decades. Consensus was never achieved for concepts like containment, Domino Theory, window of vulnerability, mutual assured destruction, sufficiency, counter value, counter force, fratricide, and proliferation. Defense budgets swelled and shrunk in what is now incorrectly portrayed as an easily defined environment. What kind of *national threat consensus* does the threat-based advocates think can be calculated in the more volatile environment of the next ten years?

The 20th Century also serves as a reminder that we tend to use military force against *unforeseen* threats rather than anticipated ones. While we were building nuclear forces for massive retaliation in the 1950s, we fought conventionally in Korea and Lebanon. At the height of the Cold War in the 60s and 70s, we went to Vietnam and the Dominican Republic. In the 80s, it was Lebanon and Grenada. And the last three years produced military actions in Panama and the

Persian Gulf. In fact, there have been over 200 instances where the U.S. used military force since 1946--more than half of these instances didn't involve either communist giant of the Cold War, the Soviet Union and Peoples' Republic of China.⁶

These crises were anticipated by no more than a few weeks--some only by days, if at all. The U.S. had no time to design, field, and deploy forces to counter specific threats--they were *come as you are affairs*. We took immediately available forces and adapted them to each crisis. What makes us think we can sculpt a different future? The clear implication is that by building a threat-based force, the U.S. would be unprepared to handle the future military actions most likely to confront the U.S.--the unanticipated ones.

Instead of a capability-based or a threat-based force, I advocate a U.S. military structured on need with three major tenets: interests, commitments, and superpower status.

The U.S. uses instruments of statecraft to promote and protect global interests. For some interests, diplomacy is the only means considered justifiable--for others, economic, social, and psychological measures can be added in appropriate proportions. But for vital interests, military actions are considered, as a last resort, when other instruments fail to attain U.S. objectives. Therefore, sufficient military capability is needed to provide credible options to national leaders wherever vital U.S. interests are at risk.

Collective security commitments, in my view, must be honored until renegotiated. Our future on the international scene and as an ally is directly tied to credibility and reliability. While the post-Cold War environment poses new security opportunities, existing commitments must

remain integral to U.S. force structure--at least in the short run.

The United States' status as the sole superpower is beyond dispute. I believe this role is inseparable from the U.S. psychic. It is now unfathomable for Americans to be labeled anything less than a superpower. To remain one, the U.S. force structure must:⁷

- deter other nations from taking military actions against U.S. sovereignty or interests
- be able to intervene, if necessary, with a large conventional force (*a la* Desert Storm) while maintaining a comparable one in reserve
- keep other nations from perceiving a need for significantly larger military forces designed to fill perceived voids left by inadequate U.S. capability

Forward Presence: Backdrop for Overseas Bases

**"Strategy is the art of distributing and applying
the military means to fulfill the ends of politics."
B.H. Liddell Hart, 1954**

The Cold War coined the phrase *forward presence*. In earlier times the term was *foreign presence*--a key ingredient of a nation's political, military, and economic power.

The ancient practice of putting military forces on foreign territory was usually to subjugate, exploit, or colonize other lands. By the 19th Century, technology lengthened the reach of nations, and *coaling stations* were needed to service an empire's navy or control trade routes. Over time, nations also evolved a *forward* thrust to foreign presence--engage the enemy as far from one's

borders as possible to buffer the homeland from the horrors of war.⁸

In the bipolar world of the last 45 years, forward presence was designed to deter the Soviet Union from gaining power and influence anywhere by confronting them everywhere. This environment produced a large peacetime force--a new experience for the United States, as was the concept of a constant security threat.

A forward basing strategy presented the U.S. with opportunities to capitalize on its new position as a world military power by:⁹

- providing defense in depth and early warning for North America
- assuring allies of U.S. involvement should the Soviets move on them
- dispersing forces around the Soviets' periphery, complicating their targeting problem
- creating single service, joint, and combined training opportunities with and without allies

Military presence overseas gave the U.S. the ability to further U.S. interests in a variety of ways:

- countering threats to U.S. or allied interests
- projecting power to deter or influence friends and foes
- protecting lines of communications
- supplying military assistance
- demonstrating alliance commitment by U.S.
- stabilizing regional politics
- promoting political considerations
- enhancing host nation status

Historically, U.S. overseas bases were indispensable in meeting these objectives. However,

technology, particularly air and naval, gave us the ability to be *forward* without being *foreign* (Figure 2 shows the types of forward presence prescribed by current U.S. military strategy).

Overseas bases are the most complete form of forward presence--offering convenience, security, and flexibility not inherent in the *lesser forms of access*. All forward presence mechanisms shown in Figure 2 can be (and are) accomplished by using U.S. overseas bases.

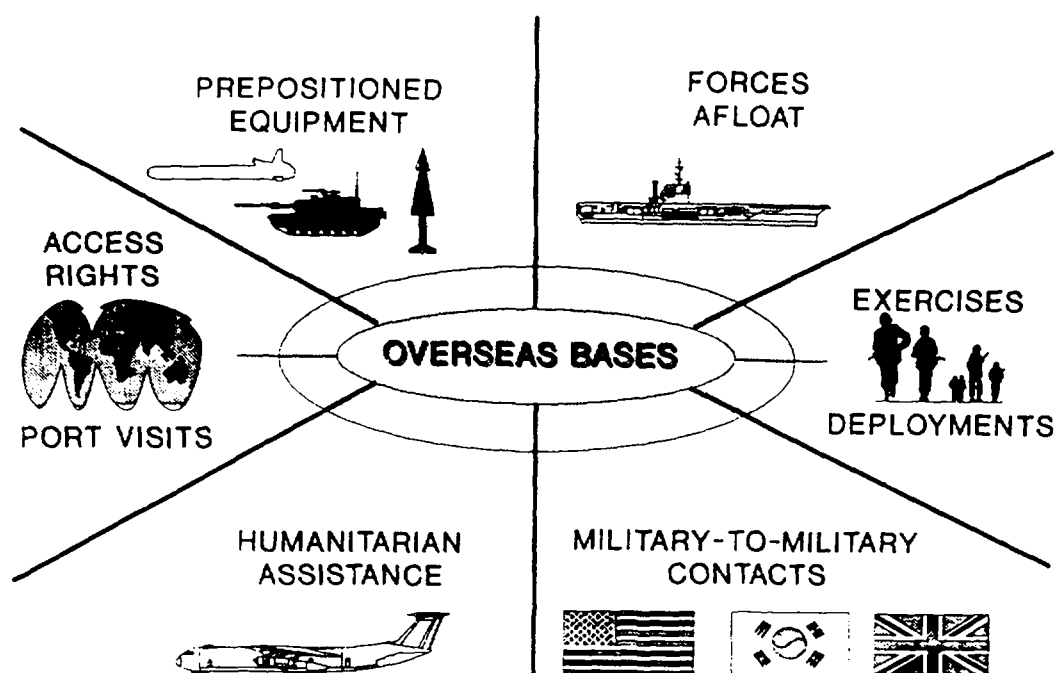


Figure 2. Forms of Forward Presence¹⁰

It's important to remember that overseas bases are linked to more than just forward presence. Over the years, they have played important roles in leveraging force structure, justifying programs, and supporting courses of action just because they were already there. Little imagination is needed to connect overseas installations and the concepts policy makers want them

to support (Figure 3 is a list of the more important ones).

Alliances	U.S. image
Foreign military sales	U.S. self-esteem
Balance of payments	Diplomatic leverage
Security assistance	Force structure
Economic assistance	Foreign relations
Mobility assets	Coalitions
Warning	Regional scenarios
U.S. influence	Active-Reserve mix
Balance of power	Research and Development
Regional hegemony	Intelligence activities

Figure 3. Concepts linked with Overseas Bases

Some concepts, such as alliances and force structure, have a direct linkages with overseas bases. Others, like influence and image, are less direct because they are based on judgment and perceptions. The key for our analysis is to realize the parameters in which these linkages were made have been altered by the end of the Cold War, and to a lesser extent, Desert Storm. Therefore, we need to adjust our perspective and challenge previously held beliefs.

Definitions and Scenarios In the Eye of the Beholder

"As important as having strength is being known to have it."
McGeorge Bundy, 1964

Overseas bases are about power -- perceived and real. The subject covers a broad range of political, economic, and bureaucratic elements. It's important to sharpen our view of overseas basing in these terms to understand the impact of proposing any changes in current U.S. forward

presence.

The East-West confrontation set the stage for U.S. military strategy over the last 45 years. Alliances were based on mutual security needs--tending to unite member policies and behavior. There has been a direct correlation between formal security pacts and our overseas basing structure.¹¹ Four multilateral and three bilateral treaties form the basis for over 95% of the U.S. presence overseas.¹²

However, the U.S. no longer seems inclined to use the formal diplomatic tools which, in the past, established overseas bases. Our most recent treaty was signed over 30 years ago!¹³ Consequently, other forms of forward presence--less obtrusive and less dependent upon formal security pacts than overseas bases--have increased in importance and utility. I see recent events in the Pacific foretelling future arrangements.

Circumstances dictated we would no longer have bases in the Philippines. These were *replaced* by shifting functions to other U.S. bases and finalizing an access agreement with Singapore. We judged the U.S. could maintain sufficient presence under this new arrangement to protect our vital interests in the region. Further, we concluded the region would be no less stable by this new *lesser degree of presence*. No one is challenging either of these determinations or our actions. Why? Could the same be done in other regions of the world?

Clearly, the absence of a military rival to the U.S. gives us a chance to redefine concepts like engaged, credible presence, symbolic force, token commitment, sufficiency, vulnerability, and deterrence. Each term has been *colored* by the Cold War shadow and the zero sum game played by both East and West. Instead, a more unpredictable, multipolar international arena is inventing a

new lexicon in which definitions are relative, less concrete, and not necessarily universal.

Likewise, military actions in one region of the world don't produce the global impact they did during the Cold War. The United States no longer has to link its intentions and presence in the Pacific with Western Europe, or South Asia, or the Middle East. In turn, the ability to do a region by region analysis changes the logic that keeps certain overseas bases still in operation.¹⁴

In this regard, Desert Storm gives insight to future international thinking about American resolve, interests, and military capability. We:

- proved willing to fight for vital interests even without *permanent* bases in a given region
- showed that commitments not governed by formal treaty would be honored
- continued to rely heavily on en route and staging bases due to lift limitations
- created out-of-theater options for forward deployed forces

The clear implication is that other forward presence alternatives--besides overseas basing--are becoming more credible. However, there is significant *baggage* in trying to reorient U.S. forward presence structure--particularly with regard to the seven formal treaties previously cited. In some cases, we have been paying for basing privileges, but in others, the host nation shares in the cost. To alter the U.S. presence will have a profound dollar and cents effect on our allies as well as us.

To illustrate, closing a U.S. overseas base will probably adversely affect the host country in at least three ways:¹⁵

- Host nations have built bureaucracies and local communities have grown to service American installations on their soil. These entities will fight base closures because

such actions threaten their existence and economic power.

- Disposition of U.S. property used in other countries could become contentious. In many cases, if we take the bulk of our real property from installations we no longer intend to use (like fuel lines, phone systems, air traffic control equipment, etc.), the bases become inoperable--possibly hurting host nation capability and souring U.S. relations.
- Significant environmental clean-up may be involved when returning real estate once used as American bases to the host country. Compensating for waste disposal practices of earlier eras may be costlier than we imagine. Disagreements in this area may potentially affect remaining U.S. bases in the country or our ability to negotiate future access rights.

From an internal perspective, altering overseas force structure poses significant challenges for U.S. institutions and budgets. At times, our bureaucratic issues can become as important to the overseas basing discussion as any strategy or international security consideration.

In a perverse way, there are no *American* bases. Instead, we have Army posts and Navy and Air Force bases--but no *American* ones. The way each service views and treats overseas basing reflects institutional priorities and biases.

A significant portion of the U.S. Army is based overseas. Over the years, the Warsaw Pact threat was a convenient and compelling argument to justify the size of the Army. If that leverage goes away, which most strategists believe has already happened, so does much of the basis upon which the Army is organized.¹⁶

The Navy and Air Force, on the other hand, see overseas basing in relation to ship and airplane needs and characteristics. Instead of numbers of personnel, their discussions are more likely to be about type and number of weapon systems--often at the expense of each other. These roles and missions debates usually center around power projection, reaction time, and mobility.

The old axiom of where you stand depends upon where you sit, seems particularly true regarding overseas bases. In essence, the U.S. should not change its approach to overseas basing without rethinking the value--to both our allies and us--of those remaining bases.

Expectations Cold War Thinking Hangs On

**"Victory smiles upon those who anticipate the changes
in the character of war, not upon those who wait
to adapt themselves after they occur."**

Giulio Douhet

To further refine our understanding of overseas basing, I will address five specific assertions often made during forward presence discussions which I don't consider valid.

First, some strategists argue overseas bases are critical for ensuring U.S. freedom of action.

From these *Little Americas*--complete with housing, medical, shopping, and entertainment facilities--we expect to operate, project power, and protect U.S. interests as we see fit.

Reasonable expectations during peace. However, to exercise complete autonomy from overseas facilities requires an almost colonial relationship over the host country. Such arrangements haven't existed for years--except arguably in the Philippines and Panama.

A brief look at history points to instances where allies interfered with U.S. plans because our proposed actions were contrary to the host's national interests:

- Some nations have prohibited U.S. deployment of specific weapons within their countries
- Nuclear-powered ships have been denied entry into ports normally open to U.S. shipping
- NATO nations didn't allow the U.S. to use *our* European bases to resupply Israel during the 1973 war
- Certain allies barred us from using U.S. bases in and air routes over their territory to launch a 1986 raid on Libya

The first two restrictions were known and incorporated into planning. The other limitations were imposed during crises--injecting difficulties and reducing American options. Thus, U.S. capability to use *our* overseas bases is really based on a presumption of goodwill, mutual interests, and negotiated rights with the host government. I contend we have been deluded in believing U.S. overseas bases provide more capability and autonomy than they really do.

Second, some planners believe overseas bases will gain in value during periods of increasing uncertainty. They consider overseas bases essential for flexibility and responsiveness to meet unforeseen threats. Overseas basing proponents argue forward deployed forces can lessen response time and reduce certain risks.

However, other developments have actually decreased U.S. need for overseas bases over the last three decades:

- Technology has reduced our dependence on a global network of installations. In particular, advances in transportation and communications affect notions of time and

- space governing the movement and control of forces. En route refueling and nuclear power give weapon systems greater range. Satellites can now *see* and *talk* over-the-horizon without using ground stations as listening posts or relays.¹⁷
- Rising nationalism has heightened concern about U.S. activities and lessened enthusiasm for hosting our forces. Foreign bases compromise, to some degree, a host nation's sovereignty. Power projection is intrusive by nature. What we see as *forward*, others see as *occupying*.¹⁸
 - A multipolar world produces an array of allied interests not always synchronized with ours--nor dependent upon us. When our allies seek increased compensation for our presence--as the Philippines did last year--they are in effect saying that our bases are worth relatively less to them than they once were.

Regardless of whether we actually admitted it, overseas basing has become less of a necessity. The past 28 years clearly shows a decrease on our reliance on them. From a 1964 zenith of over one million forward deployed personnel in 700 locations (not counting Vietnam!), we currently stand at less than half that total--and project going significantly lower by 1995.¹⁹

The third point I challenge, believed by many, is the claim that overseas bases are essential to demonstrate U.S. commitment and lend credibility to our alliances and interests. The fear is that other countries will view the U.S. commitment as transitory absent the establishment of base(s).

My sense is, while true in some cases, more weight is now given to this premise than is justified. Even at the height of the Cold War, several vital U.S. interests were protected through strategic deterrence, other forms of forward presence, and strong allies--without using *permanent* U.S. overseas bases. Israel and Saudi Arabia have been prime examples. The U.S. commitment to each

is unquestionable in world opinion. Yet, we have not built major installations, nor stationed significant numbers of troops in either country (save a crisis like Desert Shield-Desert Storm).

Fewer strategists should believe that U.S. commitment can only be demonstrated by significant U.S. presence in the post-Cold War world. The United States has proven it can and will respond militarily to commitments and vital interests without having its own bases in a region. Further, we have shown the effectiveness of being *forward* without being *foreign* (like in the Middle East where the U.S. has used exercises, access rights, prepositioned materiel, and military-to-military contacts since 1948).

Fourth, some postulate that withdrawing U.S. troops would leave regional voids and lead to instabilities. This logic contends our presence has been so central to certain regional political, economic, and military landscapes for so long, that withdrawal would be seen as a decline in U.S. interest. The anxiety is two fold: world perception of United States' power, and who fills the void?

Setting aside Western Europe, Japan, and Korea for the moment, this belief is a Cold War remnant. Today, events are more localized and non-escalating than before the fall of the Berlin Wall. For example, the instability in the area formerly known as Yugoslavia doesn't seem to affect much of Europe--let alone another region of the world. Therefore, the need for us to deploy or base forces to counter this instability (absent any other vital U.S. interest) is non-existent.

Further, if a void does arise, it's not axiomatic that it will be filled. In some parts of the world, I see an absence of countries able to wield formidable regional military power. Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and the South Pacific, in my view, are good examples.

Western Europe, Japan, and Korea are different because of formal alliances and the relative power of countries in each region. The next decade is recognized as a transition period and troops may no longer be required to guarantee ally sovereignty, stabilize an environment, or demonstrate U.S. regional commitment. But these decisions require separate regional analysis and negotiation.

For example, I have found European consensus regarding NATO and the United States:²⁰

- NATO is a stabilizing element with a proven track record
- U.S. leadership is integral to NATO's existence
- Europeans are willing to discuss altering military forces, but in measured amounts to ensure collective security of the region
- an abrupt, unilateral withdrawal of U.S. forces from NATO would be seen as breaking faith

In like manner, we should assess the political climate for Korea, Japan, and the Pacific region. The calculations should be balanced against our vital interests in the region and their associated threats, risks, and relative worth.

Last, some who now believe we should close most of our overseas bases say increased warning time eliminates the need to forward deploy forces. They theorize the United States, as the world's only superpower, has the ability to assess foreign capabilities and detect mobilization in advance of any sizable crisis. Thus, the risk for not having regional forces is minimal.

This logic ignores the nature of warning. First, warning is always ambiguous. While indicators

may be known, we never have enough to be certain or judge others' intentions. Second, the earlier the warning, the less likely we are to believe it and act. Third, given perfect warning, the U.S. decision process will likely use all the available time given by the warning to reach a consensus--negating value of the warning.

The Persian Gulf is instructive. We did not believe Iraq would invade Kuwait until it happened--even though indicators showed masses of heavily armed forces moving toward the border. As a result, we failed to counter by deploying forces to the region to deter the aggression (although it's doubtful deterrence would have been successful in this case because I think Saddam Hussein didn't believe the U.S. would be willing to risk the consequences of military action in the region).

The lesson to be learned from disputing these five assertions about forward presence and overseas basing is that few, if any, absolute concepts will be found in the post-Cold War environment.

New Strategy Based on Need

"The best strategy is to always be strong."
Carl von Clausewitz, 1832

The U.S. forward strategy should provide needed military options when our vital national interests are at risk. To define the needed structure of overseas bases--and forward presence in general--I propose viewing the world in terms of situations and crises.²¹

I would classify each region where the U.S. has vital interests as a situation. Situations endure and evolve--sliding up and down a relative scale of acceptability. The U.S. continually deals with situations through the instruments of statecraft--diplomacy, economics, military, social, and psychological.

The overall military objectives during situations, as I see it, should be twofold: hedge (vice deterrence in the Cold War sense) against potential threats to our national interests; and shape attitudes and actions of allies and others in concert with U.S. policies. Although using a few *traditional* overseas bases, other forms of forward presence should be emphasized (access rights, prepositioned equipment, joint exercises, etc.). America's *situational* forward presence (including overseas bases) should provide:

- deterrence against threats to U.S. interests
- immediate crisis response
- force projection
- surge capability

During situations, diplomacy should be the statecraft instrument of *choice*. While the U.S. military has significant responsibilities during situations, these should be at a constant level of effort. As a result, the U.S. forward presence would tend toward Navy, Marine, Air Force, and special operations force projection activity. The preponderance of our Army and strategic naval and air forces would remain stateside.

Crises, on the other hand, are events that threaten U.S. interests. They have varying degrees of urgency and importance depending on the interests at risk and the anticipated impact of possible actions. A crisis is over (for the U.S.) when an acceptable outcome is reached. Its results then

become integral to the evolving situation in that particular region.

Military force--both forward and stateside--would tend to play a bigger role in the crisis environment relative to other instruments of statecraft. While combat operations are not always a given during crises, more consideration is given to the military's ability to:

- increase combat readiness
- deploy additional forces, from CONUS or elsewhere, to the region in crisis
- sustain forward assets until crisis termination
- redeploy forces out of the crisis area

The Middle East provides a good example for this scheme of situation and crisis. It has been an area that we have determined has vital American interests. I would classify it as a situation. The 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait constituted a crisis and the U.S. mobilized forces. When an acceptable status quo was restored in early 1991, the crisis ended and the majority of our forces redeployed out of the region. The aftermath of the crisis then added to the evolving Middle Eastern situation still confronting U.S. interests.

In the context of situations and crises, I see the U.S. needing a small core of overseas bases (or access to ports, airfields, and staging areas that can serve the same function as a military installation) to provide a flexible, and if needed, expandable military infrastructure in regions of the world where we have vital interests. These *bases* might be thought of as a new type of *coaling station*--tending to be naval and air bases rather than garrisons housing significant numbers of troops. This concept of *coaling* is not so much to support the needs of each ship or plane forward deployed. Rather, it is to maintain:

- initial crisis response forces

- a base of operation for force projection and exercises
- a staging capability and storage for prepositioned equipment to ease lift requirements for mobilization
- cantonment and maneuver areas to support combat forces deploying from the U.S. for regional exercises or crisis response

My concept calls for periodic in-theater exercising of forces that would deploy into a given region to protect U.S. or allied interests. When the U.S. decides to use the military instrument, the idea is to have an in-place infrastructure capable of bringing sufficient combat power to bear during a crisis. When the crisis is over and the threat eliminated, these forces would be recovered to the United States or the region from which they deployed.

I see the recent Singapore agreement as the model for overseas basing in the future. With Singapore, the U.S. *payment* is increased training for the Singapore military. In return, the U.S. can use naval repair facilities, operate resupply vessels from that port, and rotate jet fighter squadrons into Singaporean airfields.²²

The impact of my overseas basing approach would be most significant on the Army--which would no longer have major overseas installations, except perhaps during a major crisis. Instead, the Army would adopt dual basing or periodic rotational techniques to maintain *regional proficiency* parallel to vital U.S. interests. Consequently, the basis for sizing conventional ground forces and the related active-reserve mix must be rethought without leveraging the Fulda Gap or Rhine River into the equation.

For the Navy and Air Force, the challenge is to build a network of *bases* (or accesses) parallel and

proportional to U.S. interests. Then, depending upon the level of security, storage, and prepositioned stocks acquired, reassess lift and mobility capabilities to ensure potential success with follow-on force requirements.

My overseas basing plan is conducive for moving into new regions as U.S. interests develop--like in Eastern Europe or the former Soviet republics. It also calls for eliminating U.S. installations that don't counter threats or contribute to the presence needed in a region. I contend Guantanamo Bay is such a candidate--since it provides more irritation to Cuba than real deterrence and houses functions that can be duplicated more economically elsewhere.

My vision for this new overseas basing structure can only be achieved over time. In transitioning to this new structure, I propose developing the following guidelines:

- honor existing commitments until renegotiations take place
- base all collective security arrangements on burden sharing with the host nation paying for base operating costs, as a minimum
- forward deploy significant combat forces only against urgent, specific threats
- position *caretaker personnel* as needed for prepositioned equipment and maneuver areas
- barter real property on overseas bases we intend to close for future access rights and relief from unreasonable environmental liabilities

New World Order Same Old Problems

"There can be no such thing as Fortress America. If ever we were reduced to the isolation implied by that term we would occupy a prison, not a fortress."

President Eisenhower
State of the Union
January 9, 1959

After World War I, the U.S. dismantled critical military capabilities. There were no identifiable threats on the horizon. After all, the war to end war had been fought and military force finally proved to be an obsolete instrument of statecraft--right?

I detect the same naive thinking in today's environment. Since immediate threats aren't well defined, the military in general, and overseas bases in particular, are losing political support to domestic concerns. In a sense, the Department of Defense is being seen as a bank holding a peace dividend to be cashed in favor of other priorities.

In order to articulate force structure needs, we need to adjust our thinking about ends, ways, and means apart from the Cold War. We must realize that strategy formulation is shifting from a global orientation to a regional one--shattering linkages that seemed like facts of life only a couple of years ago. In advocating a defense structure with forward presence, we must chain needs to interests, commitments, and superpower needs.

The U.S. is inextricably involved with most regions of the world--and in need of a small network of bases (or more correctly, accesses) paralleling our needs. We need to learn to become more partner than curator.

The 1990s will put added pressure on the diplomatic skills of our government to clearly articulate vital interests and negotiate favorable arrangements which will not limit future military options. Of course, the task is made easier when our vital interests and natural allies coincided in the right locations--on critical great circle routes and overlooking strategic geographical choke points. When this condition doesn't exist, the challenge becomes more complex and uncertain.

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RAPID MOBILITY:
OBSTACLES TO LEGITIMATE STRATEGY
by
Colonel Richard B. Bundy

INTRODUCTION

Our nation has produced the most capable airlift fleet in the world. The requirement to rapidly deploy a deterrent armed force, or reinforce forward based forces in a given theater, is a mainstay of our stated national strategy. The United States is the only nation that can establish an Air Line of Communication (ALOC) reaching to any part of the globe, move the largest pieces of military equipment by air, and sustain the airlift operation for an indefinite period of time. The United Nations has relied on our airlift support to deploy and resupply peace keeping forces to world wide trouble spots: Africa, the Middle East, and Cambodia just a few of the recent examples. The changing world situation is presenting new challenges and dictating a reevaluation of our strategy and necessary military capability. A key question will be how can we address the nation's need to establish or maintain a credible airlift capability to execute our national strategy.

NATIONAL STRATEGY

The National Security Strategy of the United States, published under President Bush's signature in August 1991, addressed the criticality of rapid mobility. "In this new era, therefore, the ability to project our power will underpin our strategy more than ever. We must be able to deploy substantial forces and sustain them in parts of the world where prepositioning of equipment will not always be feasible, where adequate bases may not be available (at least before a crisis) and where there is a less developed industrial base and infrastructure to support our forces once they have arrived. Our strategy demands we be able to move men and material to the scene of a crisis at a pace and numbers sufficient to field and

overwhelming force. The 100-hour success of our ground forces in the war to liberate Kuwait was stunning, but we should not allow it to obscure the fact that we required six months to deploy these forces. As our overall force levels draw down and our forward-deployed forces shrink, we must sustain and expand our investment in airlift, sealift and --where possible-- prepositioning."

The current National Military Strategy of the United States was published by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Powell, in January 1992. Under the eight Strategic Principles of military readiness, the following is stated regarding Power Projection. "Our ability to project power, both from the United States and from forward deployed locations, has strategic value beyond crisis response. It is a day in and day out contributor to deterrence, regional stability, and collective security. It becomes an even more critical part of our military strategy since overseas presence will be reduced and our regional focus has been enhanced." In the section on the Base Force Framework, four supporting capabilities are listed as essential. One of these four is Transportation, and it is described as follows: "Regional focus, flexible/adaptive planning, and reduced forward presence have all combined to significantly increase our reliance on strategic mobility. The United States requires sufficient strategic mobility to rapidly deploy and sustain overwhelming combat power in any region where US national interests are threatened. Pre-positioned materiel, either ashore or afloat, can contribute to strategic mobility by reducing the requirements for early heavy lift at the time of crisis. Any weak link along this complex chain can disrupt or even halt a deployment."

The purpose of quoting these two documents of national strategy is to focus on the significant challenge to providing the resources to comply with this guidance. As we learned in the Gulf War, going to war in a theater where we have no forward deployed forces, even with excellent host nation support, requires every strategic airlift asset we have. With commercial airline augmentation, we still took three months to achieve reasonable defensive capability and six months to begin offensive operations.

STRATEGY VERSUS RESOURCES

The biggest problem in expanding our airlift capability to meet the requirements of the national strategy is the cost. Large airplanes do not come cheap. The second problem is the lack of understanding of what it takes to establish an ALOC capable of supporting theater force deployment and sustainability. Third, there are no quick fixes or easy solutions.

The Department of Defense established the need for the C-17 in the late 1970's. The nation needed to expand its airlift capability to meet regional threats such as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had just demonstrated. The Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force was formed but could not meet the first word of its name due lack of lift. The Congressionally Mandated Mobility Study (CMMS) was the reaction to DOD's funding request of \$32 billion for the C-17. Studying the nation's airlift needs and its ability to pay to support them is an old delaying tactic. More than 150 studies on this very issue were conducted between 1968 and 1983 with consistent results citing shortfalls between requirements and capability. The result of the CMMS was that the nation needed to triple its existing capability and the C-17 was

part of the least cost solution. The goal of 66 Million-Ton-Miles (MTM) per day was less than half of that required to reinforce Europe from a Soviet invasion, but it was the affordable option to improve airlift capability.

DOD has just completed two additional studies to insure that it is headed in the correct direction on improving airlift capability: the Major Aircraft Review (MAR) and the Mobility Requirements Study (MRS). Both efforts were required due to the changing world threat situation and declining defense budgets. The MAR concluded that the C-17 was the most cost effective system to procure to provide increased airlift capability. The "affordable goal" of 66 MTM was now in question, but the aging C-141 fleet will soon begin to run out of service life after already receiving one extension program. The MRS concluded that the current programmed capability was all that the nation could afford, we needed more to support the national strategy, but we could revisit the requirement downstream to determine if the C-17 line needed to be extended past the 120 programmed from the MAR decision. Some debate did occur when it appeared that the MRS was used to validate SECDEF's MAR decision that the affordable goal was "the requirement." The fact that the C-17 is still an approved program is considered a victory for mobility in light of the Air Force losing 12 Tactical Fighter Wings by 1995 as part of the 25 percent DOD force reduction. Even with this reduction, the forces are available to meet deployment requirements, but the lift capability to execute the national strategy is not currently programmed.

Moving armed forces units is more than just loading up the jets and flying them to the destination. On any given day in 1989, 88 percent of its C-141 fleet was committed to flying

operations world wide. The C-5 commitment rate was 45 percent. To get the system going, you have to reposition it to where the units being moved are so you can take them where they need to go. It takes a lot of aircraft to move units by air alone. An infantry division requires 1468 C-141 and 112 C-5 sorties; an air assault division 910/23; an airborne division 569/11; and the 10,000 man light divisions still require 533/7 sorties. That is a high demand on the current fleet of 234 C-141s and 109 C-5s. In addition, sixty percent of all C-5 and C-141 aircrews are in the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard (ANG). So are the people who maintain the planes and load/download them. Getting full military system capability when the decision is made to deploy forces requires Presidential activation of over 45,000 members of the reserve component. If you are moving to the other side of the world, enroute support is necessary. In the Gulf War, airlifters moved primarily through Torrejon AB, Spain, and Rhein Main AB, Germany, going into and out of the theater of operations. We already have begun moving out of Torrejon at the request of the Spanish government. Our naval base at Rota, Spain, is still in operation but has less than 25 percent of the throughput capability of Torrejon which handled 40 percent of the Gulf War airlift flow. If we move out of Rhein Main, Ramstein AB could be used but presents the same problem. These two moves could create a drastic reduction in the ALOC to Southwest Asia or reinforcement operations into the European theater. The loss of Clark AB, Philippines poses similar problems in the Pacific.

In discussing the airlift portion of the mobility problem, the suggestion is often presented of letting the commercial airlines pick more of the load. The fact is that they are

already heavily involved. Stage I of the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF), activated by Commander-in-Chief, Military Airlift Command, provides 3 passenger and 47 cargo aircraft. Stage II, activated by SECDEF, provides 27 passenger and 47 cargo aircraft. Stage III is brought in when a national emergency is declared by the President and provides 216 passenger aircraft and 115 cargo aircraft. Stage II was used during deployment supporting Desert Shield. We have adequate troop carrying capability, and more than 98 percent of the troops are planned to deploy by air. Its getting their equipment to them, and keeping them sustained in the field with provisions that present the problem. Only the C-5 can move the outsize equipment like the Mobile Rocket Launcher System, Patriot Missile Batteries, Communication Vans, Wreckers and M-1 Tanks. Most commercial aircraft are not equipped with doors and reinforced floors to carry military equipment. Those that do require special loaders to lift the cargo up to their deck height which is well above the military cargo aircraft. The KC-10 has this problem. The DOD had to purchase special loaders just for the KC-10 which must be prepositioned for their use. KC-10s, which were purchased short term for a quick increase in lift capability, were credited with only moving three percent of the equipment moved to the Gulf by air. It is a fantastic tanker and ferried lots of fighters to the war. The KC-10's programmed contribution to deployment requirements has been reduced based on the Gulf War experience. DOD also contracted with commercial carriers to specially build and operate 20 wide body jets to carry equipment in war time. This short term increase in cargo carrying also has had its draw backs as well as benefits. Carriers that go out of business are not obligated to keep these

aircraft in service. Unfortunately, Pan Am flight 103 blown up over the United Kingdom was also one of these aircraft.

OPTIONS

There are options that can be pursued to enhance our ability to address the rapid mobility needs of the US strategy. Expand the C-17 production program, build agreements with commercial cargo operators, and encourage our allies to step up to coalition airlift needs.

The C-17 program has been delayed by studies, funding inconsistencies, and contractor performance. The first test airplane has been performing well in flight test since September 1991. The first production aircraft is soon to be delivered. It would be wise to finally get all parties to step up to this aircraft that multiple studies have concluded is the most cost effective aircraft to improve the nation's airlift capability. Why can't the DOD and Congress agree to a fixed price, multi-year contract to acquire these aircraft? The current position of 120 aircraft is well short of theater support requirements and does not address replacing the C-141 fleet. A little over half the existing C-141 fleet is planned to be retained until they run out of service life around 2010. The last C-17 is planned to be purchased in 1999. A fleet of 250 C-17s, purchased under a multi-year contract, with half of them based in the ANG and Reserve, would be a cost effective option to improve US lift capability. It still would not meet most combat scenario requirements.

The air cargo business is expanding at a rapid pace even in the face of current national economic difficulties. These carriers stepped up quickly to offer their services during the Gulf War. Why not offer incentives to these carriers to get them

more actively involved in national airlift requirements? Incentives could be offered if they procured cargo aircraft like the C-17. How about subsidizing UPS operations at Louisville with them purchasing C-17s and DOD putting a Reserve unit there to augment in wartime? Another option would be to contract with these carriers to occupy space at military facilities. It might be of value to all parties to have commercial C-17 operations at bases by Los Angeles, Seattle, St Louis, Chicago, New York, and Washington D.C.

The international community relies on the US military airlift continually. The United Nations frequently calls upon our airlift to solve their equipment deployment problems. None of our allies has begun to step up to their airlift needs to be part of a rapid deploying coalition. A guest lecturer to the National War College admitted that the only way the Western European Union rapid deployment combined French/German Brigade could be effective out of their borders was with US airlift support. It would be in our best interest, and that of our allies, if they could also begin to place their lift needs into their future force structure equations. Several nations, such as Korea, volunteered assets from their commercial fleets to assist in the Gulf War deployment. They all are short of aircraft that carry military equipment. Future discussions with allies should include how to jointly improve lift capability.

CONCLUSION

Rapid mobility has been confirmed as a valid national requirement. Our strategy to quickly respond with highly mobile forces to world wide threats to our national interests is both driven and handicapped by political and economical realities. Procuring airlift aircraft is very expensive and a challenge in

an environment of declining DOD budgets. History has taught us that we have paid a much higher price for lack of military preparedness and for sustaining hollow strategies in the past. The United States has never in its military history since the invention of the airplane begun a conflict with adequate airlift forces. These difficult and dynamic times have driven creative solutions in many areas of our national requirements. Now may not be too soon to explore new options in the airlift arena.